

Stages and the California Special Education Assessment Process

OVERVIEW

Stages includes two major software components: (a) informal assessment software and (b) curriculum software. Stages informal assessment software is instructional in nature, providing activities with constructive feedback and opportunities for the learner to explore and choose. Stages curriculum software is a collection of interactive daily instructional programs appropriate for learners at each Stage.

Stages software enhances the California's alternate assessment process because:

- 1. Stages aligns with the content of California Academic Content Standards and CAPA.**
- 2. Stages allows the learner to demonstrate skills prior to formal assessment (CAPA or STAR).**
- 3. Stages provides learners with the opportunity for increased independence.**
- 4. Stages assists the learner's IEP team with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.**

1. Stages aligns with California Academic Content Standards and CAPA.

Stages ensures meaningful and effective access to general curriculum areas for learners who are preparing for the general assessment with accommodations and/or modifications. Stages content aligns with general education curriculum standards in Grade 3 mathematics and English language arts. Stages activities are also a good preparation for learners assessed with CAPA. Please refer to the next sections, "How Stages Correlates with California Academic Content Standards" and "How Stages Correlates with California Core Content Standards for the Alternate Assessment" for detailed matching between the informal assessment software and the newly developed subset of content standards plus the general standards.

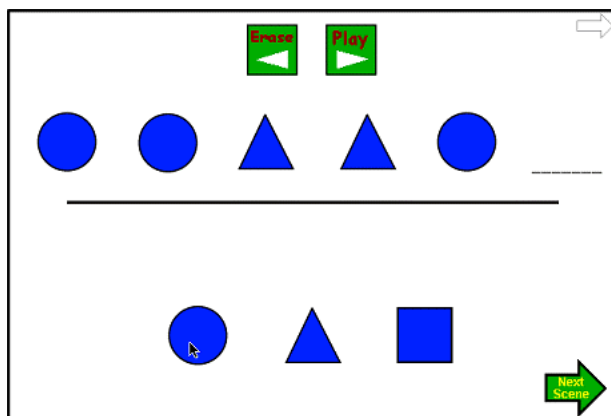
2. Stages allows the learner to demonstrate skills prior to formal assessment (CAPA or STAR).

Information from Stages activities can help the instructor determine an individual student's most appropriate accommodations and modifications. Stages activities and curriculum software give the learner the chance to show understanding and participate in the general curriculum.

Since the CAPA is only given once per year, Stages provides a way to help the teacher to gauge learner skill performance between assessments. Using Stages activities, the learner can demonstrate level of performance of skills assessed on CAPA. The instructor can use that information to choose practice software activities to strengthen the student's skills prior to the annual CAPA administration.

The feedback in Stages activities is encouraging and rewarding, providing a relaxed setting for exploring topics and demonstrating skills on a regular basis. Over time, the learner can become

more accustomed to her performance being recorded, making her responses more candid during observation or recording for CAPA.



Example screen shot from Stage Four: Create Patterns

Observation guidelines and forms in the Stages kits help the instructional team make the most out of an activity session. The data-gathering features of the software enable the observer to focus on noting the learner's behavior and thinking-out-loud responses. Two adults from the instructional team can work together: one adult can encourage the learner and the other can note valuable data about behaviors without being noticed by the learner. Alternatively if a video or still camera is available, it may be directed at the learner and the computer monitor to discreetly record interactions and other behaviors while one adult coaches. During the sessions, the learner will be less conscious of her performance being recorded, making her responses more candid. Over time, the collected data will provide evidence that the instructional team needs to build a complete picture of the learner's skill achievement.

3. Stages provides learners with the opportunity for increased independence.

The feedback in Stages activities is encouraging and rewarding, providing a relaxed setting for exploring topics and demonstrating skills with minimal supervision. Many Stages activities include accessible choice-making opportunities. Functional skills activities include various community settings.

4. Stages assists the learner's IEP team with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.

An objective of Stages software is to provide several options for input methods and other settings so that the learner's instructor, parents, and others in the IEP team can determine his ideal learning and communication environment. Different devices, auditory feedback, speeds and prompts are among the variables.

SUMMARY

Stages augments the California alternative assessment cycle. The Stages software is a comprehensive tool to assist the instructional team in collecting valuable evidence of completion of IEP-related task performance, determining assessment strategy, and discovering the learner's abilities and thinking approach.

How Stages Correlates with California Core Content Standards for the Alternate Assessment¹

Mathematics

NUMBER SENSE

Math Standard 1: Count, recognize, represent, name, and order a number of objects (up to 30).

Math Standard 5: Count, read, and write whole numbers to 100.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: *Math Readiness:* Number ID, Counting

- These activities provide a low-level entry point to Math Standard 1. *Number ID* presents the learner with numbers in the context of a telephone keypad and an elevator scene. The learner explores by selecting numbers in each scene. The learner is then asked to identify numerals that match with number words. Learners identify numerals 0 through 10. An accessible number line is provided. *Counting* asks the learner to count up to 10 familiar objects on the screen such as shoes and flowers, using 1:1 correspondence.

Math Standard 2: Identify one more than, one less than, 10 more than, and 10 less than a given number.

Math Standard 4: Compare two or more sets of objects (up to ten objects in each group) and identify which set is equal to, more than, or less than the other.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: *Math Readiness:* Estimating

Stage Five: *Problem Solving:* Number Guess

- Stage Four *Estimating* presents the learner with a scene illustrating different quantities of objects to compare. The learner has an opportunity to demonstrate the ability to use relative quantity and size vocabulary such as “more/less” and “bigger/smaller” to compare and choose the correct illustration on the screen.
- Stage Five *Number Guess* asks the learner to deduce a mystery number given clues about whether the learner’s guess is too low or too high. The instructor can set the level of difficulty by specifying the range of numbers.

Math Standard 3: Use concrete objects to determine the answers to addition and subtraction problems (for two numbers that are each less than 10).

Math Standard 10 (ALGEBRA AND FUNCTIONS): Understand the meaning of the symbols +, -, =.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: *Math Readiness:* Counting

Stage Five: *Math:* Math Facts (+, -), Word Problems (+, -)

- Stage Four *Counting* provides the learner with illustrations of objects to count.

¹ Information from the Subset of the California content Standards For Students with Significant Disabilities. Source: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/set/capa>. Accessed September 27, 2002.

- Stage Five activities give the learner a chance to demonstrate mastery of skills of computation and problem solving. *Math Facts* includes addition and subtraction facts with and without regrouping. *Word Problems* provides the learner with helpful illustrations as virtual objects to count.

COUNTING AND MONEY

Math Standard 6: Identify and know the values of coins and show different combinations of coins that equal the same value.

Math Standard 7: Solve problems using combinations of coins and bills.

Math Standard 8: Know and use the decimal notation and the dollar and cent symbols for money.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: Explore and Assess: Money ID, Counting Money, Money Equivalents

- *Money ID* presents the learner with coins up to 25¢ and bills up to \$20. The learner matches the name of the currency with the corresponding picture. *Counting Money* asks the learner to count money quantities represented by a written amount. The questions are presented in the context of realistic scenarios such as purchasing food. *Money Equivalents* presents the learner with a single coin or bill. The learner selects the equivalent set of coins or bills to show the equivalent amount.

ALGEBRA AND FUNCTIONS

Math Standard 9: Identify, sort, and classify objects by attribute and identify objects that do not belong to a particular group.

ELA Standard 4 (SIGHT WORD READING): Classify grade-appropriate categories of words (e.g., concrete collections of animals, foods, toys).

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Three: Object Identification: Animals, Toys, Food

Category Identification: Animals, Clothing, Vehicles

Function Identification: Clothing, Toys, Vehicles

Stage Four: Colors: Explore and Assess

Math Readiness: Shape ID

Stage Five: Problem Solving: Mystery Shape, Mystery Person

- In Stage Three activities, the learner given several choices and is asked to identify the object that is matches a spoken and/or written description. The learner demonstrates knowledge of categories for familiar objects such as animals and toys. The activities provide different levels of graphic representation (photo/video, drawing, symbol). *Function Identification* activities ask the learner to select objects best associated with a given verb.
- Stage Four *Color* and *Shape* activities present the learner with objects in isolation and in scenes. The learner selects the object that illustrates the correct color or shape.
- Stage Five *Mystery* activities give the learner an opportunity to demonstrate the ability to deduce a mystery object by sorting items using attributes such as color and shape.

Math Standard 10: Understand the meaning of the symbols +, -, =.

Please see Math Standard 3 for related Stages Activities.

MEASUREMENT AND GEOMETRY

Math Standard 12: Identify the time (to the nearest hour) of everyday events (e.g., lunch time is 12 o'clock; bedtime is 8 o'clock at night).

Math Standard 13: Tell time to the nearest half hour and relate time to vents (e.g., before/after, shorter/longer).

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: Explore and Assess: Telling Time

- *Telling Time* provides the learner with digital and analog clocks to explore and then asks the learner to identify the clock that displays the given time. Correct responses and distracter targets are coordinated to help the instructor determine patterns in incorrect learner responses. Realistic scenarios help the learner connect daily activities with the concept of time.

Math Standard 15: Identify and describe common geometric objects (e.g., circle, triangle, square, rectangle, cube, sphere, cone).

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Shapes: Explore and Assess

Stage Five: Math: Geometry

Problem Solving: Mystery Shape

- Stage Four *Shape ID* gives the learner an opportunity to identify two-dimensional shapes in drawings or photographs of objects in scenes and isolation.
- In Stage Five *Mystery Shape* the learner compares the attributes of two-dimensional shapes in order to deduce the correct choice. Stage Five *Geometry* asks the learner questions about shape perimeter, area, and volume with the help of on-screen diagrams showing non-conventional units such as footsteps, tiles, and cubes.

Math Standard 16: Compare the length, weight, and volume of two or more objects by using direct comparison or a nonstandard unit.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Estimating

Stage Five: Math: Fractions

- Stage Four *Estimating* gives the learner a chance to demonstrate knowledge of vocabulary for relative size, such as 'short/tall' and 'big/medium/small.'
- Stage Five *Fractions* asks the learner questions about objects divided into fractions and groups of objects.

STATISTICS, DATA ANALYSIS and PROBABILITY

Math Standard 17: Identify, describe, and extend simple patterns (such as circles or triangles) by referring to their shapes, sizes, or colors.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Explore Patterns, Continue/Fill-In Patterns, Create Patterns

- Stage Four gives the learner an opportunity to first observe simple repeating sequences of geometric shapes, sound, and color in *Explore Patterns*. The learner is asked to complete sequences of shapes by choosing the correct shape in *Continue/Fill-In Patterns*. Finally, *Create Patterns* gives the learner a chance to compose sequences based on the attributes of shape, color and sound.

Math Standard 18: Determine the approach, material, and strategies to be used.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage One: *Press and Hold, Press and Release*
Stage Two: *All Activities*
Stage Five: *Math: Word Problems (+, -, x, ÷)*
Stage Six: *Stories: Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan*
 All 'Explore' Activities

- Stage One includes short animations to determine the learner's ability to attend to an activity and use an appropriate input device. The activities present a visual, auditory, or multisensory prompt that encourages the learner to continue activating the device.
- Stage Two activities and Stage Six *Stories* present short passages for the learner to view. The learner activates an input device to advance from one screen to the next.
- Stage Three gives the learner an opportunity to independently choose desired activities and responses to questions.
- Stage Five *Word Problems* presents learners with basic arithmetic problems to solve. Some questions have illustrations to help the learner with the solution.
- Stage Six *Explore* activities give the learner an opportunity to use an input device to select items on the screen to hear and/or read information about it.

English-Language Arts

READING/WORD ANALYSIS

ELA Standard 1: Recognize and name all uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet.

ELA Standard 2: Match all consonant and short-vowel sounds to appropriate letters.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: *Reading Readiness:* Letter ID, Letter Sounds

Stage Five: *Reading:* Letters (Set 1 and 2)

- Stage Four *Letter* activities give learners a chance to identify lower case and upper case letters and their sounds. Simple animated graphics help keep the activity engaging.
- Stage Five *Letters* gives learners an opportunity to apply knowledge of alphabetization by first letter (Set 1) and by second and third letter (Set 2).

SIGHT WORD READING

ELA Standard 4: Classify grade-appropriate categories of words (e.g., concrete collections of animals, foods, toys).

See MATH: ALGEBRA AND FUNCTIONS for related Stages activities.

ELA Standard 5: Read simple one-syllable and high-frequency words (i.e., sight words).

ELA Standard 6: Match oral words to printed words.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: *Reading:* Context, Meaning

- Stage Five *Context* presents a short passage with missing words from the following list: *the, of, and, a, to, in, is, you, that, and it.* *Meaning* is a collection of activities at 5 levels of difficulty. The learner is asked to read a word on the screen and identify the picture in a scene that illustrates the meaning of the word. The words are part of the Dolch sight word list.

READING COMPREHENSION

ELA Standard 8: Follow one-step written instructions.

ELA Standard 9: Follow two-step written instructions.

ELA Standard 17 (LISTENING): Understand and follow one-and two-step oral directions.

ELA Standard 18 (LISTENING): Listen attentively.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Activities in every Stage provide the learner with opportunities to attend to spoken, written, or multisensory prompts. The observation forms at each Stage help the instructor record the learner's behavioral response to instructions.

Stage One: All Activities

Stage Three: All Activities

Stage Six: All 'Explore' Activities

- Stage One includes short animations to determine the learner's ability to attend to an activity and use an appropriate input device. The activities present a visual, auditory, or multisensory prompt that encourages the learner to continue activating the device.
- Stage Three gives the learner an opportunity to independently choose desired activities and responses to questions.
- Stage Six *Explore* activities give the learner an opportunity to use an input device to select items on the screen to hear and/or read information about it.

WRITING/WRITING STRATEGIES

ELA Standard 14: Write by moving from left to right and from top to bottom.

ELA Standard 15: Print legibly and space letters, words, and sentences appropriately.

ELA Standard 16: Demonstrate basic keyboarding skills and familiarity with computer terminology (e.g., cursor, software, memory, disk drive, hard drive).

ELA Standard 19 (SPEAKING APPLICATIONS): Share information and ideas, speaking audibly in complete, coherent sentences.

ELA Standard 20 (SPEAKING APPLICATIONS): Describe people, places, things (e.g., size, color, shape), locations, and actions.

ELA Standard 21 (SPEAKING APPLICATIONS): Stay on topic when speaking.

ELA Standard 23 (SPEAKING APPLICATIONS): Recount experiences in a logical sequence.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage One: Press and Hold, Press and Release

*Stage Seven: Making Sentences: Building Sentences, Writing Sentences
Making Stories*

- Stage One activities provide all learners with a first exposure to the computer. The learner can demonstrate awareness of the computer by activating a device in response to a prompt. The feedback from the activity is visual, auditory, or multisensory (both visual and auditory combined). Simple animated sequences and tunes keep the activity engaging for the learner.
- Stage Seven *Sentences* activities provide the learner with the opportunity to demonstrate sentence-writing skills using an appropriate input device when a conventional writing instrument is not appropriate. Text-to-speech capability in all Stage Seven activities gives the learner added feedback. *Building Sentences* gives the learner a method of demonstrating the ability to produce sentences and phrases without requiring typing skills. An accessible word wall is provided at three different grade levels.
- *Writing Sentences* and *Making Stories* provide the learner with an accessible keyboard. The learner can demonstrate the ability to produce his or her own name or a list. The non-verbal learner can also use *Making Stories* to create written expression to share with the class using the text-to-speech capability within the activity. A graphic can be imported into the activity as a writing prompt in this open-ended activity.

How Stages Correlates with California Academic Content Standards²

Mathematics Grade 3

NUMBER SENSE

1.0 Students understand the place value of whole numbers:

1. Count, read, and write whole numbers to 10,000.
2. Compare and order whole numbers to 10,000.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: *Math Readiness:* Number ID, Counting

Stage Five: *Problem Solving:* Number Guess

2.0 Students calculate and solve problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division:

- 2.1 Find the sum or difference of two whole numbers between 0 and 10,000.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: *Math:* Math Facts, Word Problems

3.0 Students understand the relationship between whole numbers, simple fractions, and decimals:

1. Compare fractions represented by drawings or concrete materials to show equivalency and to add and subtract simple fractions in context (e.g., 1/2 of a pizza is the same amount as 2/4 of another pizza that is the same size; show that 3/8 is larger than 1/4).
4. Solve problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of money amounts in decimal notation and multiply and divide money amounts in decimal notation by using whole-number multipliers and divisors.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: *Math:* Fractions

Stage Six: *Explore:* Money Orientation

Assess: Money Names, Counting Money, Money Equivalents

² Information found in *Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* and *Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*, both 1999 by the California Department of Education (Adopted December 1998, Downloaded PDF file October 24, 2001). Source: <http://www.csun.edu/~hcbio027/k12standards/grade3.html>

ALGEBRA AND FUNCTIONS

2.0 Students represent simple functional relationships:

- 2.1 Solve simple problems involving a functional relationship between two quantities (e.g., find the total cost of multiple items given the cost per unit).
- 2.2 Extend and recognize a linear pattern by its rules (e.g., the number of legs on a given number of horses may be calculated by counting by 4s or by multiplying the number of horses by 4).

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Word Problems

MEASUREMENT AND GEOMETRY

1.0 Students choose and use appropriate units and measurement tools to quantify the properties of objects:

- 1.2 Estimate or determine the area and volume of solid figures by covering them with squares or by counting the number of cubes that would fill them.
- 1.3 Find the perimeter of a polygon with integer sides.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Geometry

2.0 Students describe and compare the attributes of plane and solid geometric figures and use their understanding to show relationships and solve problems:

- 2.1 Identify, describe, and classify polygons (including pentagons, hexagons, and octagons).
- 2.2 Identify attributes of triangles (e.g., two equal sides for the isosceles triangle, three equal sides for the equilateral triangle, right angle for the right triangle).

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Shapes: Explore and Assess Shapes

English and Language Arts Grade 3

READING

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

Students understand the basic features of reading. They select letter patterns and know how to translate them into spoken language by using phonics, syllabication, and word parts. They apply this knowledge to achieve fluent oral and silent reading.

Decoding and Word Recognition

1.3 Read aloud narrative and expository text fluently and accurately and with appropriate pacing, intonation, and expression.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: *Stories:* Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan

WRITING

1.0 Writing Strategies

Students write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing successive versions).

Organization and Focus

- 1.1 Create a single paragraph:
 - a. Develop a topic sentence.
 - b. Include simple supporting facts and details.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: Making Stories

Note: Although Stages does not assess the learner's ability to develop paragraphs, Stage Seven provides the learner with a means of written expression using either standard or accessible, onscreen keyboard.

WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

1.0 Written and Oral English Language Conventions

Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

Grammar

1.2 Identify subjects and verbs that are in agreement and identify and use pronouns, adjectives, compound words, and articles correctly in writing and speaking.

- 1.3 Identify and use past, present, and future verb tenses properly in writing and speaking.
- 1.4 Identify and use subjects and verbs correctly in speaking and writing simple sentences.

Punctuation

- 1.5 Punctuate dates, city and state, and titles of books correctly.
- 1.6 Use commas in dates, locations, and addresses and for items in a series.

Capitalization

- 1.7 Capitalize geographical names, holidays, historical periods, and special events correctly.

Spelling

- 1.8 Spell correctly one-syllable words that have blends, contractions, compounds, orthographic patterns (e.g., *qu*, consonant doubling, changing the ending of a word from -y to -ies when forming the plural), and common homophones (e.g., *hair-hare*).
- 1.9 Arrange words in alphabetic order.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: *Reading:* Letters (Alphabetize)

Stage Seven: *Making Sentences:* Building Sentences, Spelling and Grammar, Writing Sentences

Making Words: Typing High-Frequency Words, Building Rhymes